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THE QUEST FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP: MIDDLE EASTERN  
CHRISTIAN NARRATIVES OF MIGRATION AND  
INCLUSION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

**Abstract**

This article explores how migrants experience the process of becoming (and being) citizens by taking the understudied case of Middle Eastern Christians of Iraqi and Egyptian heritage residing in the United Kingdom. It is argued that exclusion in the Middle East reinforces a sense of inclusion in the UK particularly due to the prevalence of the rule of law in the UK. However, by exploring a “clash of values” on the role of religion in society and sexual liberalization issues, it is suggested that Middle Eastern Christians’ support for equality and tolerance is not absolute, especially when they perceive societal norms as conflicting with religious teachings. Finally, the paper shows how the notion of “protective patriotism” is used by some Middle Eastern Christians to express their belonging to their new state by defending perceived societal values.



INTRODUCTION

Notions of equality are inherent in the concept of citizenship, whether this is conceived more narrowly as a legal status (equality of all citizens before the law), or more broadly as political participation (membership of a political community in which all are equally able to participate). The cross-border mobility of people unsettles conceptions of citizenship both as legal status, for example in debates around dual nationality,<sup>2</sup> and as membership, for example in debates about the legitimate recipients of welfare rights.<sup>3</sup> For those who have left their homelands due to discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual identity, the importance of equality for citizenship in liberal democracies is often contrasted with the “homeland” experience where the legal status of citizenship does not necessarily equate with equal treatment. The case of Middle Eastern Christian communities now

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based in the United Kingdom is explored in this article to demonstrate the ways in which citizenship conditions in the “homeland” are contrasted with experiences in the UK.

While there is an abundance of literature on how citizenship policies and institutions have responded to the challenges of cross-border mobility, less is known about how migrants themselves experience the process of becoming (and being) citizens.<sup>4</sup> This article extends the small body of work on migrants’ experiences of citizenship in the UK, by taking the case of migrants who identify as Middle Eastern Christians, a group which has hitherto rarely been considered in scholarship on European migration. In addition to empirical novelty, we argue that Middle Eastern Christians’ positionality may be theoretically productive, insofar as they are simultaneously “outsiders” due to their ethnicity or migrant status but also (or so some of them insist) “insiders,” through a claim to shared history of Christian faith. How then does this claim facilitate the quest for equal citizenship, defined by Conover et al. as “the doctrine that all human beings are of equal moral worth and that all citizens, including minorities, and especially cultural minorities, should be regarded as full and equal members of the political community?”<sup>5</sup>

We address this question by drawing on qualitative data from Egyptian and Iraqi Christians interviewed as part of a wider project on Middle Eastern Christian migrant experiences in Europe.<sup>6</sup> Many of our respondents’ narratives of citizenship contrast their current situation in the UK with previous experiences in the Middle East. While Middle Eastern Christians are indigenous to the region, they have long struggled to achieve full political rights and have experienced discrimination and violence.<sup>7</sup> Thus, in the contemporary Middle Eastern context, they fit Conover et al.’s criteria of second-class citizens: “Second-class citizens are people who have formal legal citizenship but are denied equal respect and feel reluctant to participate in the wider society’s civic and political life.”<sup>8</sup> Through an analytical framework of citizenship and equality, this article explores the dual influence of the Middle Eastern “homeland” context and Christian identity on these migrants’ experiences of citizenship in the UK. Three main themes are identified: contrasting experiences of equal citizenship before and after migration; challenges of British citizenship due to the tension between religious and secular values; and narratives of Britishness and “protective patriotism.” Given the article’s focus on contemporary Britain, our discussion is predicated on Western conceptualizations of equal citizenship, as we elaborate in the next section, acknowledging

that this concept is relatively new in Middle Eastern discourse as a result of Ottoman reforms during the nineteenth century Tanzimat period.<sup>9</sup> It is worth noting, however, that citizenship and equality were terms which our respondents, both first and second generation, readily espoused during the interviews, as we will present below.

#### EQUAL CITIZENSHIP IN THEORY AND IN PRACTICE: THE CASE OF THE UK

Notions of equality have long been associated with the idea of citizenship, the origins of which date to ancient Greece and Aristotle, who defined the *civis* as a body of equals who share in the civic life of ruling and being ruled in turn. These two constituent parts—of equal status before the law and participation in governance—remain the decisive frames by which citizenship is viewed today. Thus, contemporary scholarship on citizenship continues to draw a distinction between the narrower framing of citizenship as legal status and the broader framing of citizenship as political participation, or what Conover et al. call “moral membership.”<sup>10</sup> According to Bauböck, the former confers a legal identity on individuals which defines the “relation between individuals and territorial political entities, among which states are the most important ones,” while the latter speaks to more philosophical and normative concerns regarding the domestic political order in capitalist liberal democracies, with the literature focusing on two pressing problems.<sup>11</sup> First, how to foster civic engagement<sup>12</sup> and second, how to secure a minimal threshold of dignity for citizens confronted with the inevitable inequalities engendered by capitalism.<sup>13</sup>

While citizenship has historically been invoked in the furtherance of equality, actualizations of equal citizenship have been, according to Armstrong, “partial at best, and historically citizenship has also functioned as a category of exclusion, hierarchy, and privilege.”<sup>14</sup> In premodern and early modern times, property ownership, gender, class, race, and religion were all axes of difference by which citizenship as a legal status could be ascribed or denied.<sup>15</sup> While such arbitrary differentiation became untenable in liberal democracies during the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it remains the case that many individuals who are citizens in the formal legal sense are denied substantive citizenship in the wider political sense of moral membership. As Conover et al. succinctly put it, “Without legal citizenship, there is no citizenship, full stop. But without moral membership, citizenship is second class.”<sup>16</sup>

A highly influential “rights-based” approach to promoting equal membership and participation for all in society was pioneered in the years immediately after World War II in Britain and elsewhere in Europe, drawing on the ideas of sociologist T. H. Marshall. He argued that following the sacrifices of two world wars, political and civil rights were no longer enough to bind the citizenry.<sup>17</sup> This led to the institutionalization of the welfare state in order to guarantee economic and social rights.<sup>18</sup> Marshall’s “rights-based” model was the product of a particular geopolitical era, and its relevance is increasingly questioned, not least for assuming a traditional gendered division of labor and neglecting race-based inequalities.<sup>19</sup> Isin and Turner claim that “these problems can be summarized by saying that Marshall took the definition of citizen for granted, whereas contemporary theories of citizenship have been primarily concerned with rapidly changing identities: who is the citizen?”<sup>20</sup>

This question has particular resonance for the topic considered here, migration. The mobility of citizens may challenge the principles of citizenship noted above, both as legal status and as rights-based membership. Not only is the idea of the nation-state (in the singular) as the “master status” contested by such mobility, but the societal homogeneity which is often claimed to be the prerequisite of social and economic rights in the Marshallian model can no longer be assumed.<sup>21</sup> In light of this evolution, Joppke finds the distinction between status and rights incomplete and proposes instead a triple formulation of citizenship as status and rights, as well as identity, which in his view has become increasingly important as nation-states respond to the perceived erosion of citizenship in the other two domains.<sup>22</sup> A further development which has prompted Western European states to reconceive citizenship in terms of identity and belonging is the securitization of immigration since 2000, following urban disturbances and acts of terrorism in which young people of Muslim faith and migrant heritage were implicated. For Waite, this has led to “an increasingly neo-assimilationist state articulation of national belonging for transnational migrants,” aiming to “bolster the formal institution of citizenship (with its attendant rights and responsibilities) and tie it more explicitly to notions of belonging to the nation.”<sup>23</sup>

Such dynamics have certainly been observable in the UK case. Broadly, the British citizenship regime can be characterized up until the end of the twentieth century as *laissez-faire* and bureaucratic, a “thin” citizenship.<sup>24</sup> What we have seen in the last twenty years have been attempts to thicken it.<sup>25</sup> In response to a perceived problem of self-

segregation and ethnic minority communities leading “parallel lives” following disturbances in northern English towns in 2001,<sup>26</sup> important reforms were made to reinvigorate the institutions of British citizenship. Naturalization procedures were reconfigured so as to be a lever to encourage newcomers’ participation in British institutions and civic life (through citizenship education, improved language proficiency, and voluntary work) and citizenship ceremonies and oaths of allegiance were instituted so as to celebrate the acquisition of British identity. However, by the end of the New Labour government in 2010, granting citizenship was increasingly seen not as a means to integration but as an end in itself, to reward demonstrable integration, as implied by the new discourse of “earned citizenship.”<sup>27</sup> While proponents argued that the reforms aimed to transform Britishness into an active, participatory identity that one can “become” more than simply an emotional bond which one “inherits,”<sup>28</sup> others saw in the reforms a disciplining and assimilationist impulse in reaction to public unease about immigration and terrorism.<sup>29</sup>

In sum, migration and postimmigration ethnic diversity has reshaped citizenship as an institution in Western Europe over the last two decades. Scholars have been quick to respond to these developments, resulting in a veritable “outpouring” of literature, much of it comparative in scope and focused on national policies and institutions.<sup>30</sup> By contrast, there are few studies—at least in the British context—which give detailed examination of migrants’ (and their descendants’) experiences of the process of becoming a citizen (or of being a citizen). One exception is MacGregor and Bailey who argue that contrary to the stated aim of the UK citizenship reforms in the 2000s, the effect of new policies has been to foster an instrumental attitude among migrants about “getting nationality.” This is equated to getting a passport which would make it easier to travel (minimizing the need for travel visas) and also reduce the mistreatment which their respondents perceived from officials due to travelling on a foreign passport (especially one from a Muslim-majority country).<sup>31</sup>

One noteworthy feature of the small body of qualitative work looking at the experience of British citizenship from the perspective of migrants and their descendants is the tendency of research respondents to elide or collapse narrower notions of citizenship as legal status (a passport) into wider notions of membership and belonging (“Britishness”). This makes manifest not only the dual semantic scope of citizenship discussed above, but also the force of the recent rhetorical turn around “British values.” In traversing this terrain, we are mindful

of critical voices in this debate which argue that there is no “essential Britishness.”<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, as will be shown below, such assimilationist rhetoric was prominent in the interviews we conducted with migrants identifying as Middle Eastern Christians. Our positionality as two white British researchers is perhaps not incidental here, potentially leading to biased responses from interviewees assuming that this rhetoric was what we wanted to hear. Yet, just as important, we would argue, is respondents’ self-identification as Christian and how, as we will show, they consciously frame their situation in opposition to Muslims in Britain, some of whom share common origins in the Middle East.

#### CHRISTIANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST – RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

Under Muslim rule since the seventh century, Christians in the Middle East became known as *dhimmi* (covenanted people), whose payment of *jizya* (financial tribute) was intended to guarantee freedom of person, property, and worship.<sup>33</sup> Scholars such as Masters have likened *dhimmi* status to the contemporary Western liberal understanding of second-class citizenship discussed above.<sup>34</sup> Under the Ottoman reforms in the mid-nineteenth century, the notion of equality was addressed (although still contested) by abolishing *jizya* and proclaiming that all subjects were equal citizens. It is this religious and historical legacy which continues to influence the political discourse today in Middle Eastern countries concerning the political status of non-Muslims and also the collective memory of Middle Eastern Christians regarding citizenship and equality. Focusing specifically on the home countries of our case study communities, Egypt and Iraq, there is ambiguity regarding equality at the political level. Both countries’ constitutions proclaim that Islam is the state religion and sharia is the principal source of legislation. Yet, they also have articles stating that there is no difference between citizens based upon religious or other identities and providing freedom of religion and equality before the law.<sup>35</sup> Thus, there is a contention between the two claims as the constitutions privilege one religion over others. This unresolved citizenship debate has struggled to convince Christians that the state and wider society is committed to working towards a solution that will confine second-class citizenship to historical narratives and enable Christians to play a full and equal role in national life.

In Egypt, the national unity discourse which affirms commonality between Muslims and Christians is championed by

officials whenever Coptic grievances are aired or there is communal disharmony. However, this rhetoric is not perceived as directly addressing either underrepresentation in political life or inequality as demonstrated by church-building legislation, conversion, and violent communal incidents.<sup>36</sup> While there was initial optimism that regime change as a consequence of the 2011 revolution would lead to the fulfilment of equal citizenship for all, the deteriorating security situation and Islamist political success meant that there was no significant change, especially once the military intervened in 2013.<sup>37</sup> The backlash against the overthrow of President Mohamed Morsi increased violence against Copts. Subsequent attacks on Coptic churches have reinforced the view among Copts that their appeals for equal citizenship continue to be met with rhetoric rather than action from the Egyptian state and wider society. As a response to the revolution and its aftermath, Coptic migration increased post-2011 particularly to Canada and the United States with estimates of over 100,000 new arrivals.<sup>38</sup> However, there has not been a significant influx in numbers moving to the UK.

In Iraq, Christian attempts to participate in society have been severely affected by violence directed against them. Like all Iraqis, Christians have suffered as a consequence of the destabilized security environment post-2003 and, in particular, the rise of religious and ethnic identity as the basis of conflict. Accused of supporting the US-led invasion of Iraq merely by being coreligionists, Christians and the symbols of their faith (especially churches) have been targeted by Islamist militants.<sup>39</sup> The rise of the militant group Islamic State had a further detrimental impact due to its attempts to reestablish the historical *dhimmi* system with its connotations of second-class status in areas where Christians had a strong presence, such as Mosul in 2014. This existential threat has led to internal displacement of Christians as well as a dramatic increase in emigration, reducing the population of Christians in Iraq from an estimated 1.3 million in 2003 to around 300,000–400,000 a decade later.<sup>40</sup>

A small proportion of these refugees have made their way to the UK, joining a longer established community of some 8,000–10,000 Iraqi Christians (including second and third generations), some of whom additionally or alternatively self-define as Assyrian. The foundation of Iraqi Christian communities in the UK dates to the 1950s, after the British military withdrew from Iraq. Some Iraqi Christians held British passports due to serving in the Assyrian Levies (a militia employed by the British), and thus, immigrated to Britain. In the

following decades, the Iraqi Christian communities grew steadily, in part through existing kin networks (chain migration) and in part through new flows, especially of refugees fleeing the conflicts which have regularly convulsed Iraq since the 1980s. The Greater London area has been the major locus of settlement for denominations associated with Iraq: Syriac Orthodox, Church of the East (Ancient and Assyrian branches), Chaldean Catholics, and Syriac Catholics. While London is likewise the single largest center for Egyptian Christians in the UK, they differ from Iraqis insofar as they are geographically spread throughout the UK. This geographic diffusion is in large part due to the highly skilled profile of Egyptian Christians, since many came to Britain from the 1950s onwards as recently qualified medical doctors to complete their training, and thus were posted wherever the National Health Service had need of their expertise. The vast majority of Egyptian Christians in the UK belong to the Coptic Orthodox Church. This community numbers over 20,000 adherents and is the largest of the case study communities covered in this study.<sup>41</sup>

The research is based upon fifty semi-structured interviews with “active” members of the case study communities and six focus groups in the field sites of London and Kirkcaldy conducted in 2014–2015.<sup>42</sup> Interviewees are categorized as Coptic, Assyrian, or Iraqi Christian according to their own self-identification. Given the central role of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the community, most Coptic respondents are Coptic Orthodox. The Assyrian category includes those identifying with the Assyrian Church of the East and the Ancient Church of the East, while Iraqi Christian includes Chaldeans, Syriac Orthodox, Syriac Catholic, and Latin Catholics.<sup>43</sup>

The data comes from questions relating to participants’ migration stories, first impressions of the UK, the term “Britishness,” experiences as a British citizen, and views on their countries of origin. While participants have had different national experiences as outlined above, we argue that their status as Middle Eastern Christians has led to common understandings of challenges in the Middle East which then influence their/interviewees’ perceptions of life in the UK. The main divergence is that Assyrians and Iraqi Christians are likely to have less positive views of their “homeland” in comparison to Egyptian Christians who generally still demonstrate patriotism to their country of origin. This is especially true of Assyrians for whom modern Iraq may be perceived as a country of origin but is not accepted as the Assyrian “homeland.”



The interviewees are anonymized and categorized according to the following characteristics. First generation refers to adult migrants (that is, birth and formative years in the Middle East). Second generation refers to those born in the West (normally the UK) to migrant parents. 1.5 generation refers to those born in the Middle East but migrating (with parents) to the West (usually the UK) during childhood. Youth refers to those aged between eighteen and thirty.

The interviews were conducted in English, then transcribed and coded using NVivo software. The analysis is divided into three themes. The first theme explores the ways in which exclusion in the Middle East reinforces inclusion in the UK, focusing on rights and the rule of law. The second theme identifies challenges to equal citizenship examining the attitudes of Middle Eastern Christians towards integration and their struggles to adapt to societal values relating to the role of religion, in particular, sexual liberalization. The third theme investigates by what means Middle Eastern Christians express their belonging to their new state by exploring narratives on “Britishness,” patriotism, and threats to societal values.

EXCLUSION IN THE HOMELAND, FULFILMENT IN THE UK  
Discrimination, violence, and exclusion in the homeland due to religious minority status was a key feature of first-generation interviewees’ accounts and rationales for emigration. This experience of second-class citizenship prior to emigration is common in literature on other ethnic and religious minorities, such as Roma in Eastern Europe and Dalits in India.<sup>44</sup> Reflecting the different contexts of emigration and the political and economic situations facing Egypt and Iraq, broad patterns and differences emerge in the narratives of UK-based Egyptian and Iraqi Christians respectively. Among Copts, a significant proportion of whom work in highly skilled professions such as medicine and engineering, a particular spur for emigration centered on discrimination in employment. This was apparent in the following responses from interviewees:

For Egyptians in general, it is an over-populated country, finding jobs has always been hard. It has always been harder for Christians, just because we are a minority, and that is not really to say that we are sort of persecuted against in a sort of heavier way, but it's . . . any minority gets to struggle a little

bit.<sup>45</sup> (Coptic male, 30s, first generation)

There was a definite division between Christians and Muslims . . . especially for jobs in Egypt. (Coptic female, 40s, first generation)

Really what we would like to see is Egypt secular. All citizens are equal, the law is above everybody, no one is going to be treated different from the other because somebody is taking advantage because he is Muslim or Christian or anything. (Coptic male, 60s, first generation)

In contrast, among first generation Iraqi Christians, regardless of denomination and ethnic identity, physical harassment and violence were foregrounded in respondents' motivations for emigration. While this violence has affected all Iraqis, Christian communities are perceived as being particularly vulnerable. One respondent explained,

All the Assyrians they nearly have the same story anyway because over there you wouldn't dare to say, "I'm an Assyrian," you wouldn't dare to speak your own language, you wouldn't dare. Just because you are a Christian, you are getting abused, you are getting harassed, you are getting killed, you are getting bombed . . . so how do you expect a nation to survive or to stay? Of course, they are going to try to flee. (Assyrian male, 50s, first generation)

Similarly, another informant declared that,

The only reason they [Iraqi Christians] left their lives and houses is not because they are begging but because they are threatened. (Iraqi Christian female, 70s, first generation)

Many though not all, of the informants contrasted their experiences of discrimination and second-class status which prompted emigration with the equality and freedoms they experienced in the UK. This narrative has been a feature of migration stories told by other migrant-origin groups in Britain. Shazhadi et al. note, for instance, how visibly

observant young British Muslims of South Asian heritage appreciate the “liberty and freedom that was aspired to by their [migrant] parents.”<sup>46</sup> Certainly, an appreciation of newfound security was prevalent, particularly amongst Iraqis. In poignant remarks, a first-generation Assyrian stressed the security gained through British citizenship, even at the expense of the situation in his country of origin.

It took so long, eight to nine years or ten years to get my asylum papers. Now, I am free. Now, finally, I am human. I thank them, even though Britain destroyed my country still I thank them for [what] they give me, they keep me alive. (Assyrian male, 60s, first generation)

Respondents’ narratives cover a range of rights and values which they strived for unsuccessfully in the Middle East and which (mostly) came to be fulfilled after moving to Britain. The first point that they emphasized was equal opportunity to participate in the political process. This view resonated particularly with Coptic men. Indeed, a significant proportion of the middle-aged Coptic males interviewed were politically active in a formal sense. They explained, for example:

I love to be politically active. . . . I love to be involved in this kind of things, I love to have my voice heard especially [as] I never had my voice heard in Egypt. (Coptic male, 40s, first generation)

When we were brought up there was no political role, you see. We didn't have a political role; most people in Egypt don't have that really. . . . When people come here, they have an opportunity to read, they have an opportunity to be participants. So that changes a little bit and they want to have an active role. (Coptic male, 40s, first generation)

The second point highlighted by respondents is equal treatment regardless of ethnicity or religion. The respondents linked this to a sense of feeling at home in the UK:

In my country [Iraq], I was treated like a foreigner but in Britain, I never feel like I am foreigner, never. (Assyrian male, 60s, first generation)

Another respondent stressed equality regarding employment practices, relating his experience of being successful in obtaining a senior medical position despite being the only applicant not from the UK. He explained:

That started to give me the impression that things are done straightforward in this country. A sense of fairness, and if you are qualified for a job you will get it, regardless of your religion, your background, whatever it is. And that always gave me a tremendous trust in fairness in life in the UK. (Coptic male, 60s, first generation)

Nonetheless, others had less sanguine experiences during their careers:

Would I have progressed more say in the NHS had I come from different, . . . had I been like an English person, had I spoken in different accent, yes definitely I would. . . . This is the fact of life, this is how things are. . . . I'm still very happy, I'm very grateful, so, regardless of what I've been through. (Coptic male, 40s, first generation)

A Middle Eastern Christian cleric<sup>47</sup> explained that while he was not personally affected due to the uniqueness of his chosen profession, discrimination in employment was a significant issue for his congregation:

I'm not in a competition for jobs with anyone! [Chuckles] I am the only one. But, I think. . . for some of the congregation they are still, you know, if you don't have the British nationality you are always . . . they seek first a British, and then the EU, and then the Commonwealth, and then any others. (Cleric)

While some respondents' positive employment experiences in the UK were in stark contrast to others' sense of unfair treatment, there was

nonetheless broad agreement that legal redress was available in the event of prejudice and discrimination. The quote below is indicative of the importance placed on the rule of law by many interviewees.

The rule of law [is] important, the infrastructure of the country is not only roads and bridges and parks and hospitals, I feel infrastructure is very important – policies, rules of law, courts em to fight corruption, em democracy. (Coptic male, 40s, first generation)

Furthermore, several respondents mentioned that being British was not an identity they were excluded from attaining, precisely because this identity was founded on respect for the rule of law and equality of treatment. For example,

Someone who respects certain em, the way we live in the UK, that's the term Britishness to me. You respect others regardless of religion, regardless of background, regardless of color, em, em, you respect the rule of law, em, human rights, all the things. (Coptic male, 40s, first generation)

The legal process of obtaining citizenship is clearly an important element of these Middle Eastern Christian migrants' self-perceptions and their sense of being acknowledged by others as belonging to society.<sup>48</sup> However, there can be a gap between a legal process and its accompanying rhetoric and everyday experiences. A recurring theme from respondents was the view that legal citizenship did not abrogate the fact that these individuals were born in another country and thus were still viewed as foreigners in terms of their background. As foreigners, they argued that they should not expect to be treated in the same manner as a British-born citizen – that is, equally. For example,

When you're in a foreign country, you're in a foreign country. You are a foreigner. That's how I look at it yeah. But I don't expect to be treated in England as an Englishman or as a British, I don't expect that you know. But that doesn't worry me. I don't let that worry me. (Assyrian male, 50s, first generation)

Thus, affected individuals use their origins in the Middle East to explain why their experience of citizenship is dissimilar to those of a nonmigrant background. However, an additional reason why some respondents did not feel excluded from a British identity was the legacy of Britain's Christian heritage.

We are happy to open ourselves to the society and to embrace lots of the values of the society because many of the values here are Christian values so we embrace it very well because it is our values as well. (Coptic male, 50s, first generation)

Similarly, an Iraqi interviewee stated, "We don't have a lot of differences from the mindset of the country itself" (Iraqi Christian male, 50s, first generation). These findings regarding the compatibility of religious values with "British" values are replicated in research with other migrant-origin groups of non-Christian faith. For example, Shazhadi et al. narrate the discourse of visibly observant young British Muslims who have no issue in identifying their religious values with the more nebulous concept of "British" values.<sup>49</sup> However, other research reveals that such identifications are not reciprocated by many in the nonmigrant majority population, due to discursive constructions of "otherness" which question whether British Muslims are "good enough" citizens, particularly amid the current securitization of immigration from Muslim-majority countries.<sup>50</sup> While none of our Middle Eastern Christian respondents alluded to a perception of not being considered a full citizen on account of their faith, it should be noted that the role of Christianity in the UK was debated within both communities with some feeling that contemporary society no longer reflects these values.<sup>51</sup> This theme will be explored in greater depth in the following section.

#### CLASH OF VALUES

The earlier discussion highlighted the emphasis Middle Eastern Christians placed on the rule of law and equal treatment as being tenets of citizenship within a democratic state. While they are keen to take advantage of these opportunities, there are difficulties when this same openness and focus on equality, in their view, conflict with religious teachings. Navigating legislation, policies, and societal attitudes on issues regarding sexual liberalization, understood by Norris and Inglehart as relating to divorce, abortion, and homosexuality, is

common among faith-based migrant groups in Western states.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, debates regarding the integration of migrants (primarily Muslims) often point to presumed incompatibility between their religious beliefs and practices and secular values enshrined within Western liberal democracy.<sup>53</sup> The perspectives of Middle Eastern Christians on issues of sexual liberalization allows this theme to be explored beyond the Islam-secularism prism. Due to their origins, this group has experienced similar cultural influences as Muslims coming from the Middle East, and as shown below, interviewees indicated that their culture was not supportive of policies such as the legalization of same-sex marriage.<sup>54</sup> However, most stressed that it was their religious affiliation and church teachings which shaped their views on what they described as “morality” issues. In contrast to some faith-based migrant groups, Middle Eastern Christians have a shared religious identity with the majority population in the UK – a country with an established church which has influenced legislature and a Christian heritage, even as the number of people self-identifying as practicing Christians has declined.<sup>55</sup> Saffran argues that the issue is not whether a religion is still dominant in society but whether “it has lost its monopoly over defining the proper path to morality or spirituality.”<sup>56</sup> For the majority of the British population, this would appear to be accurate as religion is perceived as a private matter that should not infringe upon the views and rights of others.<sup>57</sup> It is clear that there is disagreement within faith traditions not solely relating to how much compromise should be made but also regarding the actual meaning of religious teachings and texts. Thus, while some Christian denominations in the UK recognize divorce, allow same-sex marriage, appoint clergy identifying as homosexual, and do not seek to alter existing legislation on abortion, others oppose these issues based upon biblical teachings.<sup>58</sup> The churches relevant to the case study communities fall into the latter category. Divorce is not recognized in any of the churches. Similarly, church teachings are hostile towards homosexuality, abortion, and euthanasia.<sup>59</sup> This reveals a tension in our respondents’ narratives. While many stressed the importance of obeying the rule of law and following state policies, social practice and legislation related to sexual liberalization poses a challenge. There is a dominant view amongst these communities that church teachings must trump state policies when the two collide. However, our respondents articulated two different approaches in dealing with this tension.

The first approach is to stress disagreement with state policies relating to these sensitive issues but to follow the rule of law approach

to citizenship and not actively resist these developments. This applies if our respondents perceive that legislation is not imposed upon them. For example, on the matter of homosexuality, a cleric stated,

Something we do not like, to be honest is far from moral, not only far from religion. For example, I do not know how to say it; to encourage homosexual, why? . . . If there is people so leave them, but why encourage it? (Cleric)

The gulf between the views of the settled majority and the Middle Eastern Christian minority is illustrated here by one respondent referring to “our own culture” when discussing legislation on homosexuality, and thus, implicitly denying the right of Middle Eastern Christians to intervene in such debates:

Well, you know, first of all, you know, we, we have our own culture. But same time we, we respect the law and the culture of the country we are living in it. So, they have all the rights. . . . It's up to them. But we, as long as we are not obligated to do the same, so this is . . . here comes the advantage of the secular system. It's ok. (Assyrian male, 50s, first generation)

Some respondents indicated that while they complied with church teachings on these issues, they did not believe that they should judge another individual's life choices. These respondents usually prefaced their remarks with the caveat that they were open-minded and/or did not share the views of the majority within their community. For example, one respondent claimed,

I think I'm open-minded to anything and everything, I, you know whether it's homosexuality or whatever, I have no qualms about saying, our faith says this is morally wrong, but does that mean I have anything against them, no, of course not! (Iraqi Christian female, 70s, first generation)

The second approach to dealing with the church-state tension is to focus on the differences and to emphasize that the church and community cannot compromise on biblical teaching regardless of the



impact it may have on participation in politics and society as citizens. The resounding narrative of this second group is that church teachings must come first. For example,

We believe that when it comes to the bible teachings, er, it takes precedent, priority over anything else, even the law. (Coptic male, 40s, first generation)

Such respondents emphasize the view that church teachings and practices remain constant regardless of the external environment. Thus, Christians will continue to practice their religion whether it is compatible with or contradictory to the state and society. For example, one older Iraqi Christian explained:

We do what's God's will, we don't do what's bad whoever say it, government say it, other say it, we don't do that. (Iraqi Christian male, 70s, first generation)

One perspective held within the community is that unchecked freedom within British society is leading to the above developments which many see as being incompatible with the tenets of their faith. Therefore, there appears to be a disparity between Middle Eastern Christians' narratives of equality and tolerance, dependent on the context. In the Middle East, their position as a community facing difficulties in achieving equality, both at the state and societal levels, leads them to support the rule of law in the UK as they presume that it will improve their circumstances. In contrast, once they are no longer in that marginalized context, they seem less inclined to advocate equality and tolerance for all groups in society. Thus, many respondents understand citizenship as a means to exercise their own rights rather than extending these to other marginalized groups in wider society, in particular the LGBTQ community, as shown in the above analysis. This discussion on values illustrates the potential difficulties for Middle Eastern Christians in balancing the requirements of equality legislation with biblical teachings.<sup>60</sup> One case successfully taken to the European Court of Human Rights in 2013 involved a Coptic female employee of British Airways who challenged changes to the uniform policy which meant that she was not allowed to wear a cross necklace if it was visible whereas other religious symbols such as hijabs or turbans were

accepted.<sup>61</sup> Other legal cases highlight potential conflict between religious beliefs and employment requirements. Examples include registrars obligated to perform same-sex civil partnerships and marriage ceremonies as a consequence of the Civil Partnership Act 2004, the subsequent Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 applying to England and Wales, and the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014; officials involved in decision-making regarding fostering and adoption which includes same sex parents; National Health Service employees being suspended due to sharing their faith/praying with patients; and small business owners such as accommodation providers and wedding cake suppliers who refuse to provide specific services requested by same sex couples.<sup>62</sup> Consequently, the views expressed by our respondents indicate a potential impact on their ability to perform their duties and responsibilities as citizens – that is, following equality legislation when it conflicts with their religious views. This is clearly justified by clergy and community members from the understanding that “church trumps state.” In such circumstances, Conover et al.’s definition of equal citizenship is challenged because while Middle Eastern Christians can still participate in the political system without agreeing with mainstream societal views, legislation requirements could restrict the extent of that participation.

Building on this discussion, the majority of the individuals interviewed perceive a clash between their own Middle Eastern Christian traditions and state and societal views concerning freedom of speech. Respondents echo the view examined by Kettell in his study on anti-secularism in the UK. He argues that for some Christians in the UK, there is “a militant, aggressive and intolerant form of secularism . . . seeking to drive faith out of the public square, posing a serious threat to religious freedoms and endangering the moral health of the nation.”<sup>63</sup> Some interviewees raised the concern that the secular nature of society led to feel uneasy when publicly talking about and demonstrating their faith. For example, one informant disclosed,

You can’t really express your faith because you might offend someone or someone might be upset by the very fact that you’re Christian. But I can’t help it, it’s in my identity. So, you do kind of get pushed aside. (Coptic female, youth, second generation)

Similarly, when discussing religion at work, another interviewee suggested that this is often misconstrued as proselytization.

Talking about religion or discussing religion, it's sort of become taboo in a way, which is unfortunate because then they'll say that this person doesn't believe in it and it's like ok, I'm just talking, it's not that I'm trying to convert the person, it's just something we're talking about. (Assyrian male youth, 1.5 generation)

The idea of double standards in freedom of speech was raised by our interviewees as they argued that other religions, not including Christianity, and identity groups are protected by legislation. Relevant legislation such as the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2010 does cover all groups defined by ethnic and religious affiliation, but as Thompson argues, it "contains a strong and explicit commitment to the protection of freedom of expression" which includes the "dislike, ridicule, and insult" of religious beliefs and practices.<sup>64</sup> However, our respondents argued that Christianity can be mocked and its beliefs abused, but this type of behavior is not deemed acceptable by society if directed against other religions or groups. One respondent argued,

There's nothing like Christophobic or something, you can say whatever you want, and [it's] just freedom. But if you touch other areas you would be categorized as being racist or homophobic, or whatever. So, there's a word for everything, but mocking [Christian] religion or mocking God is freedom of speech. (Coptic male, 30s, first generation)

These frustrations in balancing religious beliefs with being law-abiding citizens are clearly significant in affecting Middle Eastern Christians' understandings of what citizenship involves in the UK. For our interviewees, equality and tolerance, prized values when contrasting the political climate and societal opportunities between the Middle East and the UK, are significant when Middle Eastern Christians are the marginalized group due to their religious identity. Yet, there is a difference when that context changes to one where they may still be marginalized due to their migrant heritage and perceptions on the role

of religion in society but are able to exercise their rights as citizens. In such circumstances, they appear less keen to extend these same values of equality and tolerance to marginalized groups such as the LGBTQ community in this new context. However, this “clash of values” does not appear to significantly impact their willingness to identify with and value British citizenship as our next theme suggests.

#### PROTECTIVE PATRIOTISM

Regardless of challenges in adapting to the British context of citizenship and equal rights, expressions of patriotism<sup>65</sup> were still significant among the case study community. Clearly, we cannot discount the fact that the context of the researcher-respondent relationship may have had some bearing on our interviewees’ willingness to divulge more ambivalent or negative attitudes vis-à-vis British society and institutions, as alluded to above. That said, we do find sufficient evidence in our data to conclude that the Middle Eastern Christians we spoke to have a positive identification with Britain. Our respondents’ discourse went beyond straightforward acknowledgements of the benefits they had gained from moving to Britain to include examples of the efforts they had made to “give something back” to their new adopted homeland and protect it. For example, one Coptic medic narrated,

I feel very privileged to be here of course. And one of the reasons I chose to work for the NHS was I felt I want to give something back to the UK. (Coptic male, 40s, first generation)

This discourse on reciprocity often contrasts the positive contribution of Middle Eastern Christians to the perceived failings of other minority groups, most notably Muslims.<sup>66</sup> This is not exclusive to Middle Eastern Christians, as has been shown in several studies on Hindu and Sikh diasporas in the UK and North America.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, as one informant reported,

We have no issues with that [integrating into UK society]. Not like other cultures that are ghettoing themselves, that have to marry the same religion, even they have to marry the same sect of that religion, alright, because of the conflict between the

different sects. We don't have that issue. (Iraqi Christian male, 50s, first generation)

The argument that the individuals whose activities appear to discourage integration should return to their countries of origin was also a familiar narrative. One younger respondent recounted an incident where he had an argument with a Muslim acquaintance who joined his group of friends of Arab-background and started discussing Islamizing British society.

But then I, when I know somebody is like, thinks like that, I'm like "you know it's a shame you are in this country you should go back to your own country. If you are thinking that, then you are disrespecting me, and not just that you're disrespecting this country, because this country is Christian and this country feeds you and your mother and gives you bread, and school education and you are now talking about this one faith?" (Iraqi Christian male, 30s, first generation)

This notion of being a British citizen also encompasses defending and protecting British society and institutions when these were perceived to be under threat. We describe this type of narrative as "protective patriotism." One key concern, which emerged in our respondents' narratives, was the threat posed to British, and wider European, society by so-called dangerous Islam. These narratives draw on two sources. The first is inspiration from people's pre-migration experiences as members of religious minority communities living in the Middle East (or secondhand accounts thereof, for those who had not grown up in the Middle East). The second is anti-Muslim political discourse in the UK and elsewhere in Europe, such as the notion of a "Muslim takeover" of Europe and equating Islam with terrorism.<sup>68</sup> An illustration of this view is provided below.

Migration within Britain is what worries me now. Not from outside. Some people who are good citizens and they leave areas and I know there are certain areas in Manchester or Birmingham you can't live there if you are British [and] white because it's been taken over by er fanatics – Muslim gangs for example. . . . So that worries me because I've seen it happening in my previous country. (Coptic male, 40s, first generation)

In response to this perceived threat to Britain posed by Muslims, several respondents expressed the duty they felt to protect and defend so-called British values. They argued that since most British people did not have firsthand experience of life in the Middle East, they were not able to grasp the magnitude of this threat and therefore it was incumbent on Middle Eastern Christians to enlighten their nonmigrant British compatriots in this regard. For example,

I have to do awareness for everyone, eh, especially for British people, always I say “wake up! This is the disease. Don’t [let it] reach the United Kingdom.” . . . this is my duty and to support my people and to declare what is going on in our country and to make eh, British people to be more wiser and more sensitive and open eye because some of the jihadist, fundamental, they would like to take opportunity and to abuse the system of United Kingdom. (Iraqi Christian male, 50s, first generation)

Similarly, another respondent stated,

And you have to make people wake up, and feel what’s good, what’s bad. What is dangerous, what’s safe. . . . You come, join the society, help in building it up, respect it, respect of the rules – you are welcome. If you do otherwise, we’ll shake your hand, thank you very much, and go back where you are coming from. That’s what I believe in. (Coptic male, 60s, first generation)

A further example of protective patriotism is an anecdote recounted by one older Middle Eastern Christian woman about overhearing an Arab-Muslim woman disparaging her fellow passengers by calling them “infidels” while on a bus in London. Understanding what was being said as an Arabic-speaking Christian, the interviewee decided to intervene by publicly upbraiding the person who had made the remarks. She argued that this was an example of when “I have to defend the British in their country” (Iraqi Christian female, 70s, first generation).<sup>69</sup> Similarly, when asked what “Britishness” meant to them, respondents tended to refer to the values of the country and the need to protect them as illustrated by the following quotes.

Well we have to protect the British values. . . . So, we really have to show the world that we are British, and we have to be proud that we, we do a lot. (Assyrian male, 50s, first generation)

Love of the country is part of our identity that's means to me Britishness. To be accommodating, accepting everybody, work for the rest of the country. When you see things happening, going to drag this country down, you point them out and can't stand for it. (Coptic male, 50s, first generation)

Thus, our respondents perceive that exercising citizenship is to practice and defend "British" values, which are positioned as being the opposite of the values and objectives of another religious minority in the country, namely Muslims. Again, collective experiences in the countries of origin influence the ways in which Middle Eastern Christians define Islam and Muslims in this new location. The fear that the intolerance, discrimination, and violence which affects the Middle East could spread to the UK appears to be the foundation for these narratives of "protective patriotism."

## CONCLUSION

Conceptually, equality is foundational to citizenship, whether it be conceived narrowly as legal status or more broadly as political participation. In practice, however, achieving equality has proved far from easy, particularly for ethnocultural or religious minorities. These questions have become more pressing in Western liberal democracies since World War II as populations became more diverse, largely (although not exclusively) through immigration, leading to the establishment of new minority groups. By focusing on Middle Eastern Christian migrant communities in the UK, this article has moved analysis beyond the customary focus on Europe's Muslim communities and the accompanying "securitization" lens. It is also theoretically productive, insofar as Middle Eastern Christians are simultaneously "outsiders" due to their ethnicity or migration status and "insiders" due to claiming a shared history of Christian faith. How then does this claim facilitate the quest for equal citizenship?

In answer, it was noted at the outset that what prompted our respondents' migration originally was the experience of discrimination

or violence in the Middle East due to their minority religious status. Thus, the discussion above highlighted that for Middle Eastern Christian migrants, negotiating citizenship in the UK is directly influenced by their collective homeland experience. Migrating to the UK, where they perceived robust institutional and legal mechanisms to promote equality of all citizens, was seen as a means to achieve equal footing in society that had been denied them in the Middle East. In large part, these expectations of equality before the law have been met in Britain. Despite their “outsider” status, many Middle Eastern Christians reported that being from a visible ethnic minority was not a barrier to equal treatment. If discrimination had been encountered, respondents felt legal redress was possible, having confidence that the rule of law would be respected.

Conversely, the value of the “insider” status, which some claimed on account of a shared Christian heritage, was sometimes more ambiguous, due to the growing influence of secularism in British society. As a religious minority in the Middle East, the respondents championed the values of equality and tolerance to legitimize their claims to equal citizenship. However, in the British context, they have discovered that these same values are used to include other marginalized sectors of society, particularly the LGBTQ community. The predominant response has been to challenge this approach and to perceive a clash between church and state, one in which church teachings must triumph over conflicting legislation and societal norms. Thus, in this new environment prized due to its equality and tolerance for them, most of our Middle Eastern Christians respondents were not willing to recognize equality for all groups, especially those whose views differ in areas regarding sexual liberalization. In other contexts, however, they unambiguously promoted their insider status, particularly with regard to the neo-assimilationist rhetoric of “British values” and “Britishness” promoted by politicians of mainstream parties since the early 2000s.<sup>70</sup> Middle Eastern Christians portray themselves as exemplary citizens in adhering to and protecting what they identify as “British values” in antithesis to supposedly “Muslim” values. Such narratives again underlined the importance of the homeland context, with interviewees feeling an obligation to forewarn people with no experience of the Middle East about the threat they perceived to British society from so-called dangerous Islam. In conclusion, transposing Middle Eastern Christians’ thwarted quest for equal citizenship from the Middle East to the UK has not proved wholly successful as they have still to negotiate outcomes of long



sought-after equality and tolerance which conflict with their beliefs and values.



NOTES

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<sup>2</sup> Rainer Bauböck, “Studying Citizenship Constellations,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36, no. 5 (2010): 847–59.

<sup>3</sup> Yasemin N. Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Post-National Membership in Europe* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> Sherilyn MacGregor and Gavin Bailey, “British Citizen or Other? Reflections on New Labour’s Reforms to the UK Citizenship Process,” *British Politics* 7, no. 4 (2012): 365–88.

<sup>5</sup> Pamela J. Conover, Donald D. Searing, and Ivor Crewe, “The Elusive Ideal of Equal Citizenship: Political Theory and Political Psychology in the United States and Great Britain,” *Journal of Politics* 66, no. 4 (2004): 1036.

<sup>6</sup> This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Program for research, technological development, and demonstration under grant agreement no 291827.

<sup>7</sup> Fiona McCallum, “Christian Political Participation in the Arab World,” *Islam and Christian Muslim Relations* 23, no. 1 (2012): 3–18.

<sup>8</sup> Conover, Searing, and Crewe, “The Elusive Ideal of Equal Citizenship,” 1047.

<sup>9</sup> Kail C. Ellis, “Introduction,” in *Secular Nationalism and Citizenship in Muslim Countries: Arab Christians in the Levant*, ed. Ellis (Cham, CH: Springer, 2018), 1–26.

<sup>10</sup> Conover, Searing, and Crewe, “The Elusive Ideal of Equal Citizenship,” 1047; see also Engin F. Isin and Bryan S. Turner, “Investigating Citizenship: an Agenda for Citizenship Studies,” *Citizenship Studies* 11, no. 1 (2007): 5–17.

- <sup>11</sup> Bauböck, "Studying Citizenship Constellations," 848.
- <sup>12</sup> Michael Walzer, *Obligations: Essays on Disobedience, War, and Citizenship* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970); John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1996).
- <sup>13</sup> Thomas H. Marshall, *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1964); Chris Armstrong, *Rethinking Equality: the Challenge of Equal Citizenship* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2006).
- <sup>14</sup> Armstrong, *Rethinking Equality*, 6.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>16</sup> Conover, Searing, and Crewe, "The Elusive Ideal of Equal Citizenship," 1047.
- <sup>17</sup> Marshall, *Class, Citizenship and Social Development*.
- <sup>18</sup> Isin and Turner, "Investigating Citizenship."
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*; Armstrong, *Rethinking Equality*.
- <sup>20</sup> Isin and Turner, "Investigating Citizenship," 8.
- <sup>21</sup> Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship*; David Goodhart, "Too Diverse?," *Prospect* 95 (2004): 30–37.
- <sup>22</sup> Christian Joppke, "Beyond National Models: Civic Integration Policies for Immigrants in Western Europe," *West European Politics* 30, no. 1 (2007): 1–22.
- <sup>23</sup> Louise Waite, "Neo-Assimilationist Citizenship and Belonging Policies in Britain: Meanings for Transnational Migrants in Northern England," *Geoforum* 43, no. 2 (2012): 353–61.
- <sup>24</sup> Sarah Spencer, *The Migration Debate* (Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2011).
- <sup>25</sup> Dora Kostakopoulou, "Matters of Control: Integration Tests, Naturalization Reform and Probationary Citizenship in the United Kingdom," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36, no. 5 (2010), 829–46.
- <sup>26</sup> CCRT, *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team* (London, UK: Home Office, 2001).
- <sup>27</sup> Emma Stewart and Gareth Mulvey, "Seeking Safety Beyond Refuge: the Impact of Immigration and Citizenship Policy Upon Refugees in the UK," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40, no. 7 (2004): 1023–39.
- <sup>28</sup> Dina Kiwan, "A Journey to Citizenship in the United Kingdom," *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 10, no. 1 (2008): 60–75.
- <sup>29</sup> Waite, "Neo-Assimilationist Citizenship."
- <sup>30</sup> Bauböck, "Studying Citizenship Constellations."
- <sup>31</sup> MacGregor and Bailey, "British Citizen or Other?," 379.
- <sup>32</sup> Robin Cohen, "The Incredible Vagueness of Being British/English," *International Affairs* 76, no. 3 (2000): 575–82.

<sup>33</sup> Bernard Heyberger, *Les chrétiens au Proche-Orient* (Paris, FR: Editions Payot & Rivages, 2013), 106–7.

<sup>34</sup> Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 134.

<sup>35</sup> Constitute Project, “Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt 2014,” Constitute Project, accessed 21 December 2017, [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt\\_2014.pdf](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt_2014.pdf); Constitute Project, “Constitution of Iraq 2005,” Constitute Project, accessed 21 December 2017, [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iraq\\_2005.pdf?lang=en](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iraq_2005.pdf?lang=en).

<sup>36</sup> Fiona McCallum, *Christian Religious Leadership in the Middle East: The Political Role of the Patriarch* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2010).

<sup>37</sup> Mariz Tadros, *Copts at the Crossroads: The Challenges of Building Inclusive Democracy in Egypt* (Cairo, EG: The American University in Cairo Press, 2013), 139–99.

<sup>38</sup> Jennifer Brinkerhoff, “Assimilation and Heritage Identity: Lessons from the Coptic Diaspora,” *International Migration and Integration* 17 (2016): 467–85.

<sup>39</sup> Kristian Girling, *The Chaldean Catholic Church: Modern History, Ecclesiology and Church-State Relations* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2017), 112–32.

<sup>40</sup> Erica Hunter, “The Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East,” in *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Leustean (London, UK: Routledge, 2014), 601.

<sup>41</sup> Sara Lei Sparre, Alistair Hunter, Anne Rosenlund Jørgensen, Lise Paulsen Galal, Fiona McCallum and Marta Wozniak, *Middle Eastern Christians in Europe: Histories, Cultures and Communities* (St. Andrews: University of St. Andrews, 2015), available online at: [https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/dimecce/?page\\_id=1207](https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/dimecce/?page_id=1207)

<sup>42</sup> “Active” members are understood as those who are viewed as leading and representing their community such as clergy, deacons, church youth leaders, political activists, and representatives of cultural and charitable associations. Despite attempts to have diversity in terms of gender, age, and migration generations, two-thirds of our interviewees were middle-aged, first-generation males. In response, focus groups participants were selected primarily from underrepresented groups such as youth, women, and second generation.

<sup>43</sup> Due to the small numbers of Assyrians and Iraqi Christians, we have not included further interviewee details to ensure anonymity.

<sup>44</sup> Imrich Vašečka and Michal Vašečka, “Recent Romani Migration from Slovakia to EU Member States: Romani Reaction to Discrimination or Romani Ethno-Tourism?,” *Nationalities Papers* 31, no. 1 (2003): 27–45; Vivek Kumar, “Dalit Diaspora: Invisible Existence,” *Diaspora Studies* 2, no. 1 (2009): 53–74.

<sup>45</sup> We use ellipses to indicate that an interviewee has left something unsaid.

<sup>46</sup> Ambreen Shazhadi, Hannah Smithson, Richard McHugh, and Shoba Arun, "'Society Does Treat Me Differently and That is a Shame': Understandings and Feelings of Britishness Amongst Visibly Observant Young Muslims," *Journal of Youth Studies* 21, no. 5 (2018): 1-13.

<sup>47</sup> In order to safeguard anonymity, we have not identified denominational affiliation in quotes from clergy, due to the small number of Middle Eastern Christian clerics in the UK and the associated risk of deductive disclosure.

<sup>48</sup> Conover, Searing, and Crewe, "The Elusive Ideal of Equal Citizenship."

<sup>49</sup> Shazhadi, Smithson, McHugh, and Arun, "Society Does Treat Me Differently."

<sup>50</sup> Deborah Phillips, "Claiming Spaces: British Muslim Negotiations of Urban Citizenship in an Era of New Migration," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 40, no. 1 (2015), 62-74; Shazhadi, Smithson, McHugh, and Arun, "Society Does Treat Me Differently."

<sup>51</sup> Fiona McCallum, "Shared Religion but Still a Marginalized Other: Middle Eastern Christians Encounters with Political Secularism in the UK," *Journal of Church and State* 61, no. 2 (2019): 242-61.

<sup>52</sup> Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, "Muslim Integration into Western Cultures: Between Origins and Destinations," *Political Studies* 60, no. 2 (2012): 248; see also Antje Röder, "Immigrants' Attitudes toward Homosexuality: Socialization, Religion and Acculturation in European Host Societies," *International Migration Review* 49, no. 4 (2015): 1042-70; Thomas Soehl, "From Origins to Destinations: Acculturation Trajectories in Migrants' Attitudes Towards Homosexuality," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 43, no. 11 (2017): 1831-53.

<sup>53</sup> Elisa Banfi, Matteo Gianni, and Marco Giugni, "Religious Minorities and Secularism: An Alternative View of the Impact of Religion on the Political Values of Muslims in Europe," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42, no. 2 (2016): 292-96; Norris and Inglehart, "Muslim Integration into Western Cultures."

<sup>54</sup> On the impact of country of origin culture, see Röder, "Immigrants' Attitudes Toward Homosexuality"; Soehl, "From Origins to Destinations"; and Amy Adamczyk and Cassidy Pitt, "Shaping Attitudes about Homosexuality: The Role of Religion and Cultural Context," *Social Science Research* 38, no. 2 (2009): 338-51.

<sup>55</sup> Tariq Modood, "Moderate Secularism, Religion as Identity and Respect for Religion," *The Political Quarterly* 81, no. 1 (2010): 4-14.

<sup>56</sup> William Saffran, "Introduction," in *The Secular and the Sacred: Nation, Religion and Politics*, ed. Saffran (London, UK: Frank Cass, 2003), 4.

<sup>57</sup> British Social Attitudes Survey, "Religion," *NatCen Social Research Report* 36, accessed 10 November 2019, [https://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39293/1\\_bsa36\\_religion.pdf](https://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39293/1_bsa36_religion.pdf).

<sup>58</sup> It should also be noted that there can be a divergence between official church policy and views and practices of its members.

<sup>59</sup> For an example, see Bishop Serapion, "Homosexuality and the Church: A Coptic Orthodox Perspective," *The Ecumenical Review* 50, no. 1 (1998): 78–85.

<sup>60</sup> Relevant legislation includes: European Convention on Human Rights 1953, Human Rights Act 1998, Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006, Equality Act 2007, and Equality Act 2010.

<sup>61</sup> For further details, see <http://www.bailii.org/eu/cases/ECHR/2013/37.html>.

<sup>62</sup> See Christian Legal Center, <http://www.christianconcern.com/cases>.

<sup>63</sup> Steven Kettell, "The Militant Strain: an Analysis of Anti-Secular Discourse in Britain," *Political Studies* 63 (2015): 513.

<sup>64</sup> Simon Thompson, "Freedom of Expression and Hatred of Religion," *Ethnicities* 12, no. 2 (2012): 233.

<sup>65</sup> By "patriotism" we refer to expressions of pride in one's country. See Maurizio Viroli, *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1995).

<sup>66</sup> Andreas Schmoller, "Anti-Islamic Narratives of Middle Eastern Diaspora Christians: An Interdisciplinary Analytical Framework," in *Eastern and Oriental Christianity in the Diaspora*, ed. Teule and Verheyden (Leuven, BE: Peeters, 2020), 189–211.

<sup>67</sup> Kim Knott, "Becoming a 'Faith Community': British Hindus, Identity and the Politics of representation," *Journal of Religion in Europe* 2, no. 2 (2009): 85–114; Bidisha Biswas, "Nationalism by Proxy: A Comparison of Social Movements Among Diaspora Sikhs and Hindus," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 10, no. 2 (2004): 269–95.

<sup>68</sup> Similar observations have been noted by scholars working on Middle Eastern Christian diasporas in other contexts, especially in relation to the discourse from organizations founded by these migrants. See Yvonne Haddad and Joshua Donovan, "Good Copt, Bad Copt: Competing Narratives on Coptic Identity in Egypt and the United States," *Studies in World Christianity* 19 no. 3 (2013): 208–232 and Nadia Marzouki, "The US Coptic Diaspora and the Limit of Polarization," *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies* 14, no. 3 (2016): 261–76.

<sup>69</sup> Similar accounts are provided by Lise Paulsen Galal in her work on Egyptian and Iraqi Christians in Denmark and Andreas Schmoller in his work on Coptic and Syriac migrants in Austria. See Lise Paulsen Galal, "'If I Want to Travel, I Just Travel.' – Travels and Dwellings Among Assyrians and Copts in Denmark," in *Middle Eastern Christians and Europe: Historical Legacies*

*and Present Challenges*, ed. Schmoller (Vienna, AT: Lit Verlag, 2016), 125–46;  
and Schmoller, “Anti-Islamic Narratives.”

<sup>70</sup> Waite, “Neo-Assimilationist Citizenship.”